Social Media:
Routine Operations

AWOC Core IC 5

Welcome to the lesson on using social media during routine operations. There are four lessons in this module, and this is the third one. If you have not gone through the first two lessons, please do so since this lesson builds upon the information already presented.

Course Completion Info

Tabs - 4 Tabs (Including Introduction)

Last Modified: May 29, 2015 at 01:41 PM

PROPERTIES

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Learning Objectives

- Identify benefits of social media use in communicating information to public.
- Describe how to increase likelihood of engagement on Facebook & Twitter.
- Discuss best practices on use of social media in routine operations.
- Identify best practices for handling negative comments and account security.

In this lesson, we are going to more specifically identify the benefits of using social media within the National Weather Service to communicate information to the public. Then, we are going to look at the importance of people engaging with the content we post, and how to increase the likelihood that people will interact. Best practices for using social media during routine operations will be identified, including how to handle responding to negative comments and dealing with account security. What is presented in this training are best practices that are generalized for all offices across the country, and should be adapted to your office as necessary. Once you have reviewed these learning objectives, click the next button to continue to the next slide.

Social Media Platforms

- **Social Media** – socially driven media

- **Facebook**: a self-oriented social identity that connects people with friends around them.
- **Twitter**: a real-time information network.
- **YouTube**: a video sharing network.

Social media and traditional news media have a lot in common. Both attempt to deliver news about current events to a wide audience. Unlike traditional media, of course, the reporters on social media are not trained in journalism and the news that is delivered is typically more self-oriented or is specific to the interests of the author. But the differences that are most significant to the National Weather Service is that anybody can use social media and two-way conversations can occur. As discussed in previous lessons, it is this capability that holds the potential of helping to accomplish the National Weather Service mission.

Each social media platform has its own main purpose and advantages associated with that purpose. Facebook allows people to create a self-oriented, online, social identity that also connects them with friends regardless of geographic distances. That original design was later extended to allow businesses and organizations like the National Weather Service to connect with people as well.

Twitter is a real-time information sharing network. Although each person has their own account, Twitter is much more oriented around fast-paced, quick nuggets of news that are shared to the people who "follow" your account and like what you have to say.

YouTube is strictly a video-sharing network. Although you can subscribe to an account, YouTube is generally not monitored as regularly for information as Facebook and Twitter are. Because of this, we will be focusing on the use of the Facebook and Twitter platforms in this lesson.

The National Weather Service's social media webpage states that the "National Weather Service is using social media tools to educate the public and share critical information related to our mission. The goal is to engage the public and our partners in "effective communication" around important weather, water, and climate issues."

Social media provides an additional opportunity beyond traditional products to fulfill the National Weather Service's mission statement. Each social media platform, when used correctly, extends our opportunity to communicate forecasts, warnings, and decision support to a large audience of people in each forecast area. These communications provide an additional source of information that people can use to help protect their own lives and property.

WFO Responsibilities

- Warnings
- Forecasts
- Communications

- Social Media is integral to communication of forecasts, warnings, and decision support information.

In general, we have three main areas of responsibility, which include issuing forecasts, issuing warnings, and communicating that information to others. The use of social media fits into the area of communication. Communicating the warning information provides the foundation for delivering decision support. In addition, communicating preparedness information and suggested actions for safety provides a foundation for educating the public for when they need to make their own critical decisions.

Focus and Control of Message

- Can help information spread.
- Can reach different demographics.
  - Races, languages, children, elderly, disabled.
- Place to provide context and control rumors.
- Can control how message is delivered.
  - Credible, truthful, consistent information source

NWS Indianapolis @NWSIndianapolis — Important: Rumors of 20-30" of #snow are EXTREMELY premature & improbable and not supported by fcst model data at this time. #INwx #nwsind — 6:58 AM - 31 Jan 2014 — 164 37

As discussed in the previous lesson, one of the primary benefits of using social media is that information is spread farther and faster by utilizing family and social networks in addition to television and radio. Though the television and radio media remains the undisputed primary distributor of warning information, social media is rising as some people's go-to source for news and information.

Repeating messages on multiple media platforms in multiple ways helps assure warning communications are more likely to be understood by the public. The goal is that more people can get information so that they can be more empowered to act when weather becomes threatening.

Because each media platform tends to reach a unique demographic of people, one of the roles of social media can be to help reach demographics that do not receive warnings through traditional means. These demographic differences occur along the lines between gender, age, and race, but it may also help support those who help move children, elderly, and others with disabilities to safety. It is also important not to forget non-English speaking people.

Social media provides an additional benefit. It provides a place where the National Weather Service can provide the appropriate context for the storm and help control any pervasive false rumors. In addition, social media allows consistent updates to be provided without going through an intermediate source to deliver the message. While the goal is not to compete with the news media, it does help to control our own message, and also helps to increase the trust between the National Weather Service and the public.

NWS Mission and Social Media

- Decision Support Services (DSS) Out…
  - Communicate warnings and storm impacts.
- …Reports In!
  - Public posts reports directly to WFO account in real time.
  - Increased verification and situational awareness.

NWS Missoula ✓
@NWSMissoula
⚙ ☕ Follow

MT @CC_WxWitch: 02:50am: #Freezing #Rain coming down fairly HVY now. #FlatheadValley #MTwx

Previous lessons discussed the importance of social media's ability to enable two-way communications. Engaging with the public and partners in this way aids the development and maintenance of trust. But how does that two-way communication work?

It turns out that there is an even more direct benefit to operations than just the establishment of trust. As we help people by communicating warnings and what storm impacts to expect, our actions are often reciprocated by the public providing reports of what they are seeing. These reports can greatly aid confidence in our forecasts and warnings when we know what is happening on the ground in real time. Beyond increasing our situational awareness, these reports can act to verify warnings in real time. This alleviates later workload in the hours and days following an event making phone calls. This makes it even more important that we reciprocate the public's efforts to provide information to us by answering their questions and showing appreciation for their reports.

Role of Social Media Interaction

Quiz - 1 question

Last Modified: May 28, 2015 at 04:34 PM

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Social Media Timeline

|	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube
Test Offices	Winter 2011	Spring 2011	Fall 2012
Nationwide Rollout	Spring 2011	Summer 2012	2013

So, how has social media been utilized in the National Weather Service so far? The next few slides show how our use of social media has grown. Facebook was the first platform to be tested and approved for national use, with Twitter and YouTube following Facebook over the next couple of years. Although each platform was introduced nationwide one at a time, all the social media platforms have been in use for a number of years now. This has allowed forecast offices to develop many of the best practices discussed in this presentation.

Growth of Social Media Pages
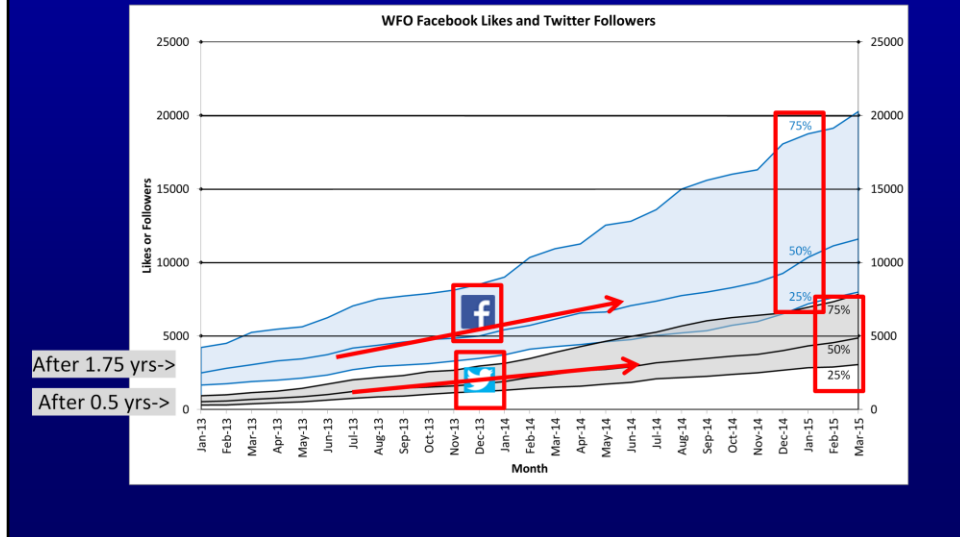
Forecast offices have seen an increasing following on both of the main social media platforms. This graph shows the 25%, 50%, and 75% quartiles of the number of Facebook Page Likes (in blue) and Twitter account followers (in black) for all forecast office accounts. Both platforms have generally seen increases in followership through the time of this recording. While most offices have seen more growth on Facebook than on Twitter, that has not been true for all offices. Thus, knowing your audience and how they react to posts on each platform will help you strategize your content.

Account size vs CWA Population
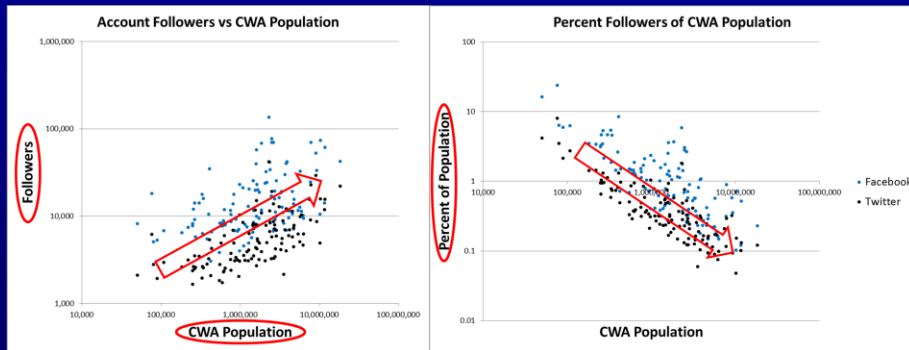
These two graphs examine the relationship between the population in an office's warning area and their number of account followers. Each plot shows the number of account followers of Facebook (in blue) and Twitter (in black) for each forecast office.

The left plot compares the number of account followers on the vertical axis to each office's warning area population on the horizontal axis. The right plot is the same, except the vertical axis shows the percent of the population in the warning area that follows the account. In general, offices that serve a greater population do get a greater following of people, but the right chart shows that offices that serve a smaller population get a greater percent of that population to follow their page. But no trends have been found in the posting strategies of offices based on the population in their warning area.

With these statistics in mind, be careful when comparing your forecast office to others. It's great to look for general things that they do well and try to emulate those, but try not to focus strictly on the number of followers they have to indicate success. While the exact plots you see here are now old, the general idea to focus on the posting characteristics rather than strictly on the baseline numbers will remain.

The number of people following WFO
Twitter accounts have generally increased
with time.

| True |
| False |

Trends in Social Media Use Interaction

Quiz - 2 questions

Last Modified: May 28, 2015 at 04:47 PM

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WFO Communications
Routine Operations

- Plan a schedule.
- Share, comment on, and ask other WFOs about using their posts.
  - Divide and conquer to increase visibility.
- Invest only allotted time in social media.

The rest of this presentation will focus on the use of Social Media during routine operations. The visibility of your social media communications will actually be greatest during severe weather, and you will gain the most followers during that time. That will be covered in more detail during the next lesson. But communication between events help solidify trust and preparedness with the public.

How that gets accomplished is with a plan. Make a schedule so that you ensure consistent posting. Interact with other forecast offices to help divide and conquer the tasks of creating good content. This includes both direct communication to share maps, templates, and ideas as well as simply sharing or retweeting great posts from other offices.

Creating good content on social media can be a source of great creativity, but it is also important to not get entrenched. Remember that communication platforms that are used for talking directly to partners, like NWS Chat, should have the highest priority.

Follow Partners on Social Media

- Local media, EMs, neighboring WFOs.
  - Can get storm reports from their pages.
  - Boosts goodwill and trust with partners.
  - Symbiotic relationship.
  - Encourages message consistency.

A great best practice is to follow the pages of local media sources and emergency managers with coverage in your forecast area. Also follow the accounts of your neighboring forecast offices to aid consistency in communication. Paying attention to other accounts has an immediate benefit in that you can use the information that people are providing to other pages for storm reports. There are also larger benefits in creating good will and trust with neighboring offices, partners, and stakeholders. Often, if you promote the accounts and information provided by others, they will return the favor. By repeating the information that you provide, their followers become aware of your account as an additional information source and vice versa. Remember, the goal is not competition, but collaboration with the other members of the Integrated Warning Team in the goal of protecting lives and property. This collaboration is accomplished when messages are consistent not just between forecast offices, but between all partners on all platforms.

As noted in the last lesson, the best way to use social media is to be a peer to the public. You do want to remain professional, but you can ask questions or make statements sounding like an individual instead of always having to sound like a collective authoritative organization. Use personal pronouns (such as I, you, he, and she) and have a relaxed and friendly tone. As people ask you questions, respond to them if you have time. Even a simple like or favorite can show appreciation for somebody's report! Doing these things allows a face and a personality to be put to the office. This lets the public know that the office has people in it who are working for them, which is always better than being a faceless government organization. Doing this consistently will help people pay attention when an event happens and you are communicating warnings.

General Principles Interaction

Quiz - 1 question

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Facebook vs Twitter Characteristics

Facebook	Twitter
• Larger audience	• Smaller audience
– 202M US active monthly	– 52M US active monthly
• Longer Posts: 63k char	• Short posts: 140 char
• Algorithm determines who sees content	• Everyone has access to everything
– Interactivity, Type, Age	– but may not be looking
• General information	• Immediate, short bursts of information
• Preparation and regional information	• Warnings

The next few slides will focus on some practical guidelines for social media communications. First, we'll take a look at the advantages and disadvantages of the Facebook and Twitter platforms. Because YouTube is not typically monitored for updating information, we will not focus on it during these modules. To begin with a couple of basic comparisons, at the time of this recording the vast majority of offices have a larger following of their Facebook accounts than Twitter accounts. This is likely to remain in the future since there are about four times as many active Facebook accounts in the United States than Twitter accounts.

Facebook allows for longer posts than Twitter's famous 140 character limit, which allows for longer descriptions with each post. A significant determinant for your posting strategy lies in who sees what information on each platform. On Facebook, an algorithm determines how many people see your post in their news feed and when they see it. Immediately after you submit a post, only a select few people will see your post right away. If those people interact with your post by liking it, sharing it, or commenting on it, then the algorithm will allow more people to see your post. This means some people who see your post will only have it show up in their news feed after some time has elapsed. This algorithm generally controls who gets to see each post by how many people are interacting with that post; if that post contains only text, a picture, or a video; how old the post is; and whether each person has interacted with that type of post from you in the past. This algorithm applies for all friend pages and business pages in Facebook, allowing them to only show content each user will enjoy, but it has consequences when we consider our mission of warning people about severe weather.

Twitter, on the other hand, allows every person who follows your account to see every post you

submit right away. This seems more advantageous, but you have to remember that not everyone will be looking at their Twitter feed at all times. With there being so many tweets produced, your information may quickly fall too far down their in feed for them to get to when a person returns to look at their account.

Based on these considerations, both platforms are good for sharing information between events, but many offices have found Facebook to be more beneficial in this context since it will likely reach more people overall and allows for longer posts. When a high-impact event is about to begin or is ongoing, Facebook is good for providing general information about an overall event, including preparedness and regional meteorological updates. Twitter is built for immediate, short bursts of timely information. You can even distribute critical warning information. Best practices for using Facebook and Twitter surrounding significant events will be covered in the next module, but let's continue looking at routine operations for now.
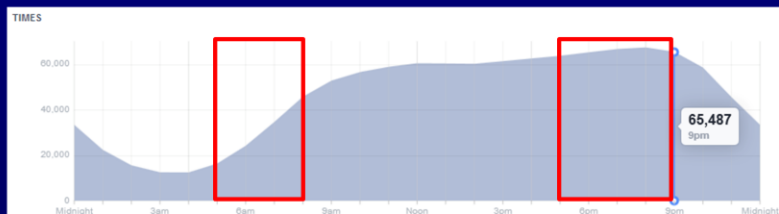
During routine operations, what is the best time of day to post? The best way to determine this is to take advantage of the analytics provided by each social media platform. This will show you when people are online and when they interact with your content. In general, a good time to post is in the morning right before people wake up and check social media while getting ready for work. Getting this information out before the morning news cycle will be especially important prior to larger events. Another good time for increasing the visibility of your post is generally in the early evening as people get off work and arrive at home. This example graph from Facebook's analytics page suggests that more people are likely to see a post in the evening right after you post it. The trend in the graph is likely representative for Twitter as well, in which case the early evening may indeed be best for assuring your tweet will be seen. But if morning posts to Facebook are interacted with, the Facebook algorithm may later show the post on other people's timelines. If this occurs, morning posts may get seen by more people overall even if most people aren't online until later in the day.

Now, this doesn't mean that you can't or shouldn't post at other times. As the example graph indicates, people are online during lunch, too. And it's not a bad idea to let midnight shift workers know you are looking out for them also. You can even post the same content in multiple time slots to maximize visibility, just make sure not to post the exact same text to keep people's interest.

These times must be balanced by the fact that each post generally has a short time to have its highest impact. How long that time period is depends on the platform you use, recent changes Facebook has made to its algorithm, and if your post "goes viral". So keep these factors in mind when building your posting strategy and plan.
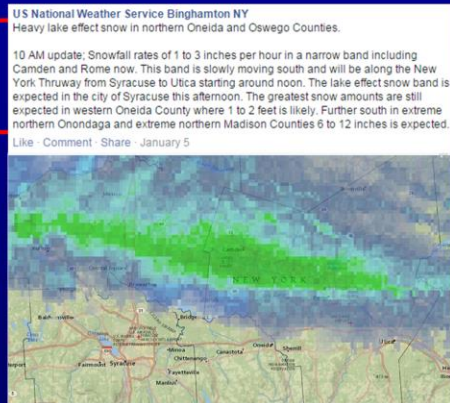
Frequency of Posts

- Know how often your followers typically engage with you.
- Determine how often you want users to engage with you.
  - Post to that frequency.

- Facebook: 3-6 posts per day
- Twitter: 4-9 posts per day

How often should you post on each platform? As in the last slide, analytics will best inform you what is best for your office. From this, you can try to determine how often your followers typically engage with your office on a day-to-day basis. If you want this to change, you should determine how often you want users to engage with you and then post at that frequency. Each post will encourage people to interact with you at that time. In general, collected data suggests that most offices have tended to post to Facebook about 3-6 times per day and to Twitter about 4-9 times per day. This difference is OK since people generally have a higher tolerance for lots of posting on Twitter than on Facebook.

Length of Posts: Facebook

- Be concise and descriptive.
  - One sentence to medium-length paragraph.
- Include a graphic or link with more information.

US National Weather Service Binghamton NY
Heavy lake effect snow in northern Oneida and Oswego Counties.

10 AM update; Snowfall rates of 1 to 3 inches per hour in a narrow band including Camden and Rome now. This band is slowly moving south and will be along the New York Thruway from Syracuse to Utica starting around noon. The lake effect snow band is expected in the city of Syracuse this afternoon. The greatest snow amounts are still expected in western Oneida County where 1 to 2 feet is likely. Further south in extreme northern Onondaga and extreme northern Madison Counties 6 to 12 inches is expected.

Like · Comment · Share · January 5

How long should posts be? Though Facebook doesn't have the character limit that Twitter does, you still don't want to write a long, detailed post. The key for a Facebook post is to be concise, but descriptive. Anything from one sentence to a medium-length paragraph is ideal. Another option is to use a symbol as a bullet point and organize key information that way. That may even catch a reader's attention. If you want to provide more information, it can be put into a graphic so long as this isn't abused either. A link to an office webpage is another good option.

Length of Posts: Twitter

- Be short, descriptive, and searchable
- Shoot for 60-70 char;
- General: Use 1-2 hashtags per tweet.
- Links: Use short URLs
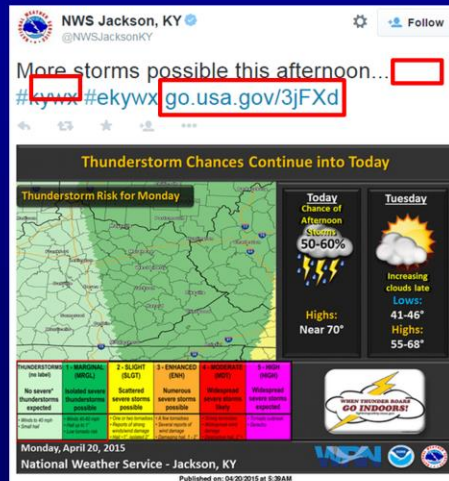
Twitter posts, on the other hand, are forced to be short due to it's 140 character limit. You must express your message in a little space, and this takes some practice. Analytics tells us that, as a general guideline, 60-70 characters is the best length for promoting people to interact with your tweet, but your ability to write that briefly will depend on what you want to communicate. In general, you want to use one or two hashtags so people can find it when performing a general search, but you don't want to overdo hashtags. With such a limited number of characters, pictures and shortened links are vital to providing the most information in your post. Pictures allow you to give more information than in the tweet itself and links allow you to forward people to a page that has much more information.

Quality Graphics and Photos

- Tweets with photos get 5x engagement.
  - Refer to maps and pictures often.
- Try to make maps regional.
  - CWA boundaries not well known.
- Ask permission from photographer to use their pictures!

See the Notes and Resources tabs for more information.

Speaking of pictures, the next few slides will discuss how to increase the visibility of your posts and increase the public's engagement with them. No matter what platform you use, pictures will get people's attention and will generally increase their engagement with your post by a factor of five. This is especially important on Facebook, where more interactions will lead to your future posts showing up in their news feed faster. The great thing about a picture is that it can generally express more information than text, but you can use words in your graphic to cover the topic. Remember to make sure the words are large enough to be seen on mobile devices, a consideration that naturally limits how many words you can put on a graphic.

Remember that when showing maps, try to make them cover a regional area so that people don't get confused with warning area borders. You can also inform people of neighboring offices so they can find the most relevant information for them. Also, if you use pictures from other accounts, make sure to ask the photographer's permission before using it on your official account. Of course, this is not necessary when you are just retweeting or sharing their post.

Additional materials have been published on the best practices of creating graphics. In the "Resources" tab in the top right of the screen, you will find one of these resources in a paper titled "It's Story Time", which covers the best practices of weather stories.

[The *It's Story Time* paper can be found by clicking on the Resources button on the top right of the player.]

Pictures are the best way to improve the visibility of posts on either platform. But the general idea applies that even in a post that only has text in it, posting something that catches the eye will get more attention. Little things like including an exclamation point or a hashtag will get more attention than posts than have neither.

Another way to help get attention is when you retweet other people and give them credit. This is a great way to interact with your audience.

Here is an example of an eye-catching post from the public that was shared by their forecast office showing what happens when you leave a sprinkler system on as the temperature drops below freezing. By showing appreciation for the picture, other people will be more likely to look for and interact with posts from the forecast office in the future. Just make sure before you share a picture that you aren't forwarding bad information or a fake picture.

From "Great Gov't Tweets"

- Tweet Characteristics
  - Picture
  - Video
  - Link
  - Hashtag
  - Mention
  - Text Only

Great Gov Tweets

https://shiningsea.measuredvoice.com

See the Notes and Resources tabs for more information.

The previous two slides mentioned that hashtags and pictures will encourage people to notice and interact with your posts. Fortunately, there is a way to quantify what people have responded to on Twitter. To see what people respond to from the National Weather Service, you can look at the Great Government Tweets website and see what elements are in tweets that often get interacted with. This website chronicles the 50 tweets from US Government accounts that get the most favorites and retweets each day. What is nice is that it controls for the number of followers that account has. Some of the things you can look for are whether the post has a picture, video, link to another website, hashtag, mentioning another user, or whether the tweet has none of those characteristics.

[Website found at https://shiningsea.measuredvoice.com]

What People Respond To

From September 2013 until December 2014, tweets that included pictures and hashtags were included in about 60% of tweets from National Weather Service accounts that were interacted with enough to appear on the Great Government Tweets website. Tweets that only contain text, on the other hand, can get interacted with a lot if the content is interesting, but this is not as common. The fact that videos rarely get a lot of interaction suggests that we have not found the best use of videos so far.

Analytics Interaction

Quiz - 1 question

Last Modified: May 28, 2015 at 05:08 PM

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Encourage Interaction

- "Like/share if you agree."
  - "Do you like the warm weather? Did you like seeing the sun today?"
- Click like if…
  Click ___ to vote…
- Photo or Caption contests
  - Fill-in-the-blank posts

NWS Boise
@NWSBoise
Our Summer 2014 photo contest winner, courtesy of Kurt Wilcox. #idwx

RETWEETS 103 FAVORITES 121
3:35 PM - 23 Sep 2014

One way to get people to interact with your post is to directly encourage interaction. On Facebook, if people interact with your page, they will be more likely to see your posts in the future. On either platform, interacting with your posts will increase their likelihood of looking for your posts in the future. This will really help when they are later threatened by weather. If the weather is really nice or the season's changing, you can ask the audience to like, share, favorite, or retweet the post if they like the weather. If you are running a photo contest or are trying to take a crude poll, you can ask the audience to click "like" or "favorite" to vote. One fun game is to ask the audience to create the best caption by filling in a blank or to come up with an entire caption themselves. Be creative in coming up with your own ideas that encourage interaction from your audience. Just make sure that your creativity remains focused on our mission and subject matter.

Vary Your Post Content

- Fore...
- Reco... ...scenes, termi...
  experiments, contests, SM Town Hall, etc.
- Discuss what people are already talking about.
  - Answer a question, address a hot topic, evoke an emotional response, have value, be humorous.

NWS Norman ✓
@NWSNorman

Confirmed toad strangler near Moorewood in NW Custr County OK - public reports 1.9 inches of rain! #okwx
6:45 PM - 4 Oct 2013

↩ 🔁 19 ★ 7
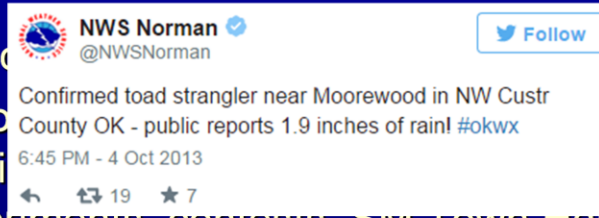
To keep the interest of your audience, it is important to vary your content. But, in general, if you are looking up something because you are interested in it, your audience will probably be interested in it as well. Providing a forecast remains the most important topic for posting because people are interested in the weather, it helps their situational awareness, and is the information they are looking for in the first place.

Beyond giving your audience the forecast, the next best thing is to share educational information about what to do during specific types of weather. Seeing this information early and often helps assure the public can recall the information when they need to act.

Beyond that, you can get more creative. You can share climate facts pertaining to the day or season, things that happened on this day several years ago, show your human side with behind-the-scenes pictures, show pictures of instrumentation, share cool weather facts and experiments, and interact through contests. Anytime you can discuss what people are already talking about you will gain the interest of the public. You can even use a little bit of humor, but be careful how you use it. You don't want to offend somebody or be insensitive, especially regarding weather-related injuries or fatalities.

From "Great Gov't Tweets"

- Tweet Content
  - Routine
  - "Please RT"
  - Before Event
  - During Event
  - After Event
  - Climate/Historical
  - Share tweet from other WFOs
  - Awareness, Explanation, or Fact
  - Non-Meteorological

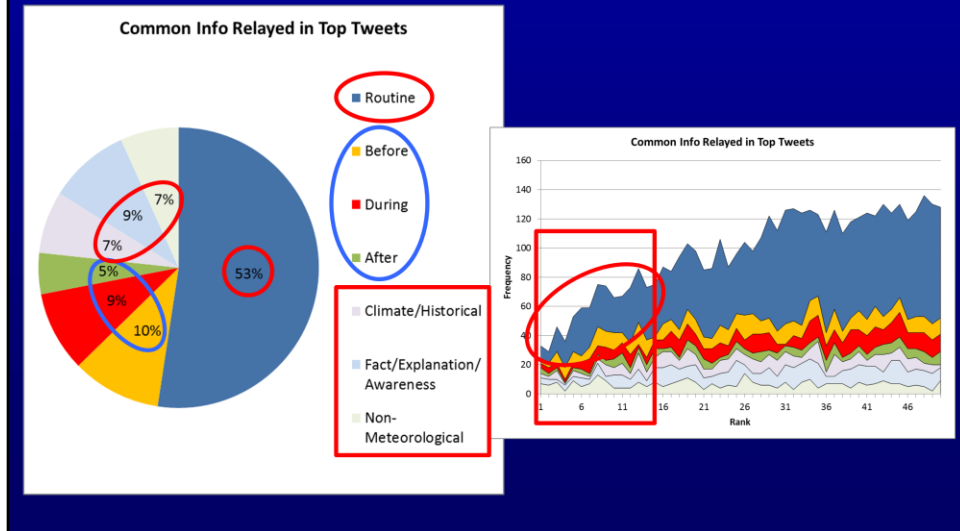Great Gov Tweets
https://shiningsea.measuredvoice.com
See the Notes and Resources tabs for more information.

So, you want to vary your post content, but what do people like? Again, we go to the Great Government Tweets website to look for what content often gets a lot of interaction. We look for tweets about routine information such as current conditions or forecasts, tweets that explicitly ask the audience to retweet it, tweets that inform the audience about an upcoming significant event, while an event is ongoing, or summarizing an event after its conclusion. In addition, we look for tweets with climatological information or historical events, tweets that share information from other offices, tweets that share an interesting fact, explain or spread awareness for something, or discuss something non-meteorological such as lunar eclipses, aurora, or earthquakes.

[Website found at https://shiningsea.measuredvoice.com]

These charts show data from September 2013 through December 2014. On the left, what is immediately noticeable is that routine information makes up half of the tweets that got interacted with enough to make it onto the Great Government Tweets website. This means that posting routine information like current conditions, records that have been broken, and forecasts should be the foundation for your content. In addition, tweets preparing for a significant event, updating the situation during an event, or summarizing an event comprise about another 25% of popular tweets. Less than 25% of tweets provide information that is in addition to products we are routinely producing anyway. We can also break down the percentages by rank. The chart on the right shows the number of tweets of each type that are recorded at each rank. In this chart, we find that it is difficult to reach the top 15 ranks or so, but even routine information can be interacted with enough to reach those top positions on a given day.

Although we mostly publish routine information anyway and other types of posts may do comparatively better on a per post basis, the point here is that you don't have to create a large number of creative posts in order for your posts to receive interaction. It's just that a creative post every now and again can provide enjoyable content amongst the routine information you are posting anyway.
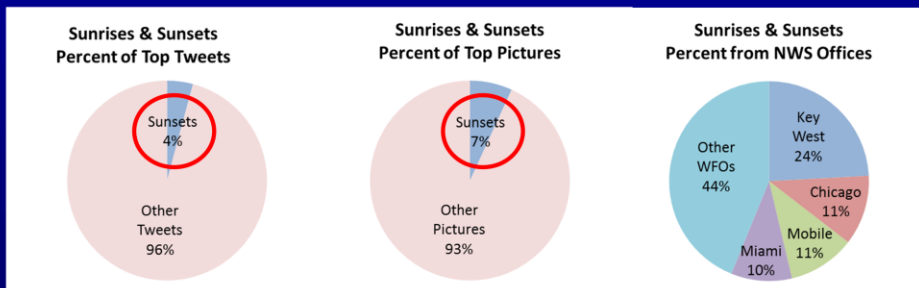
One fun trend is that sunsets and sunrises are fairly popular pictures. Sunsets and sunrises make up 4 percent of all tweets and 7 percent of all pictures that are interacted with enough to be ranked on the Great Government Tweets website. Some offices that have been very successful at this are the Key West, Chicago, Mobile, and Miami offices.

Vary Content Interaction

Quiz - 1 question

Last Modified: May 28, 2015 at 05:12 PM

PROPERTIES

On passing, 'Finish' button: Goes to Next Slide

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Allow user to leave quiz: At any time

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Negative Nellies and Trolls

- Know the difference between:
  - Negative feedback – valuable. Want to be heard.
  - Negative to be negative – just likes complaining.
  - Troll – knowingly posting to inflict mayhem.
- Have a plan. Don't have to respond.
  - If you do, be positive. Convey expertise.
- Have plan for missed forecast or mistweet.

An important skill to develop is discerning how to react to negative posts. The first thing to determine is whether the person is leaving negative feedback which is either valuable for you to hear or the author thinks is valuable, that they have a legitimate complaint, and just want to be heard. They could also be a person who is just a complainer and likes to complain just to be negative. There may be no real harm intended, but their comment may not provide useful information, either. The most important type of person to identify is what is commonly referred to as a troll, which is someone who is knowingly posting very harsh things with the sole purpose of causing mayhem.

No matter which of these is commenting to you, you must have a plan for how to deal with each type of post. Remember, you don't have to respond to a post. If the person is providing negative feedback and just wants to be heard, it can be encouraging to thank them for their comment or provide a quick response. This can be done either publicly or through private message. If the person is just being negative, it is probably best to just not respond to the person. If you do respond, inviting the person to either call or visit the office, depending on the situation, can help that person feel heard and they may even turn their opinion around after being responded to. It is often surprising when the author gets a response when they don't think of the organization as comprising of real people.

Most importantly though, never engage with a troll. Once you engage, the floodgates may open. Remember, their intention is to cause mayhem. Only delete their comment if it violates the National Weather Service's posting policy. Even then, take a screenshot and save a record of the deleted comment. Remember that deleting everything they post regardless of the content may be a limit of their free speech, so be careful about doing this.

Whenever you respond to anyone, be positive and professional. Convey your expertise. If you miss a forecast, mistweet something, or do anything that may insight negativity, it is better to address these things head on than to ignore it. Again, have a plan for these situations.
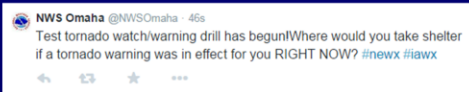
An important note should be made about account security. It is important to adhere to all protocols because the National Weather Service would be a highly visible target for online attackers. The biggest danger from attackers isn't that they would post something that is obviously not related to weather, but that they would post something dangerous that insights panic and is something that we might post. The Twitter account for Fox News famously got hacked and the hackers posted that the president had been assassinated. It was shocking information about a topic that the account normally would cover, but was false information. We obviously don't want this to happen to us.

The previous two lessons discussed our need to empower the public in their belief that they can be successful in finding and securing safety during high impact weather. But we also identified that communications between those events were crucial to developing this empowerment. This lesson built on the first two by honing in on social media as a particular tool we can use for this process.

In this lesson, we said that to use social media properly, we need to learn general principles from analytics like when to post and how long posts should be. But it is perhaps the best practices regarding our communication styles that more directly accomplish the goals identified in the first two lessons. The themes of planning your activity during routine weather so that you are providing a consistent presence, engaging with the public in conversational and interactive ways, and sharing interesting content that the public enjoys are key for us to know our audience, for the public to develop trust in us as a warning authority, and for the ultimate goal of the empowerment of the public in their decision-making.

[The original PADM paper can be found by clicking on the Resources button on the top right of the player.]

Summary

- Providing interesting content keeps followers engaged between larger weather events.
  - Follow partner social media pages.
  - Be conversational. Respond to people.
  - Share valuable information or quality photos.
  - Post a few times a day. Include pictures & maps!
  - Focus on the forecast, but vary your content.

In summary, posting to social media during routine operations between significant events is an important time for cementing trust with the public and your stakeholders and sharing preparedness information for when significant events occur. Providing interesting content keeps followers engaged so they remember to use your feed as a source of information during extreme weather.

Following your partner's social media pages can keep you situationally aware of current conditions and topics of conversation.

When communicating, be a peer with your audience and engage them in conversations. Respond to their questions and comments as time allows and retweet valuable information and photos from your followers. Post a few times a day with interesting content, and include pictures and maps to provide context and reference points. Be sure to focus your content on routine products such as forecasts and significant weather events coming up, but you can be creative to come up with other interesting graphics and content as well, so long as it is consistent with our products and services.

Please complete this quiz to assess your learning of the material. When you have passed the quiz, click "finish" to move on with the course.

Upcoming Lessons

1. Risk Assessment
2. Risk Communication
3. Social Media: Routine Operations
4. Social Media: Significant Events

As stated at the beginning of this lesson, this is the third of four lessons in this module. The next lesson covers social media use before, during, and after significant events.